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January, 1812, at the house of Humboldt, when Rauch was on his way to Italy to execute the sarcophagus, taking with him an "Abguss" of the head of the figure which he had made in Berlin, and which was later used in the execution of the complete sculpture. Körner's sonnet was therefore addressed to a bust of Queen Luise, but in reading the poem nowadays we are to think of the recumbent likeness of the queen on the sarcophagus in Charlottenburg.

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### NOTES ON BEOWULF.

166-171. Sense is usually made out of this passage by taking 168 as adversative—"in spite of all this he [Grendel] could not molest the throne." (So, in general, Garnett, Earle, L. Hall, C. Hall.) The passage is usually regarded as a Christian interpolation; but it is hard to believe that even an interpolator would so far weaken the force of the description of Grendel's descent upon Heorot as to suggest that any portion of the hall was free from his molestation. Nor, admitting this, can we find a satisfactory explanation of *ne his myne wisse*. It is ridiculous to say that Grendel did not "share the sentiment" of the throne (Earle), or "did not know His [God's] purpose" (C. Hall); it seems equally unsatisfactory to adopt the old suggestion, "he [Grendel] scorned his [Hrothgar's] favors," as does Professor C. G. Child.

The chief difficulties disappear if we make the *hē* in 168 refer to Hrothgar. Hrothgar could not approach his own throne, precious in the sight of God (*or perhaps preferably*, that precious thing, standing before the eyes of God), nor did he [Hrothgar] at that time experience His favor." It is true that according to modern English standards, *hē* could refer only to Grendel, but in Old English poetry no such logical sequence can be expected. The simple use of a definite pronoun is suffi-

cient to indicate a change of subject. Proper names often seem indeed to be purposely withheld. Thus Beowulf himself, the hero of the poem, is not mentioned by name until 149 lines after his first appearance in the poem, though all this time he has been the chief person before us; so Grendel is vaguely referred to (100) as *ān*, before he is definitely named. This indefiniteness of subject contributes largely to the obscurity of the *Beowulf*. In this particular passage, the use of the definite *hē* (168) and of *wine Scyldinga* (170) seems to me sufficient indication that Hrothgar is the subject of the last four lines of the passage.

If this interpretation be accepted, the punctuation of the passage should be changed as follows:

*Heorot eardode,  
sinc-fāge sel sweartum nihtum.  
Nō hē ƿone gif-stōl grētan mōste,  
māððum, for Metode, nē His myne wisse;  
ƿæt was wræc micel wine Scyldinga.*

311. *Lǣste se lēoma ofer landa fela.*

This beautiful line, with its suggestive connotation, reminds one of Balder's house, Breidablik.

760. *Him fæste wiðfeng; fingras burston.*

This line immediately suggests two questions: Whose fingers are referred to? and, What is the meaning of *burston*? Dictionaries and glossaries give only the obvious meanings. It is a passage that must be interpreted by the translators. The German and English translators agree in referring the fingers to Beowulf, rendering variously, "his fingers cracked" (Garnett, C. Hall); "cracked as they would burst" (Earle); "crackled" (J. L. Hall); "burstled" (Morris and Wyatt). Professor C. G. Child renders, "the fingers of the giant one snapped"; which is vague, but seems to refer to Beowulf.

None of the translators seems to have made sense out of the apparently simple *burston*. What is meant by saying that anybody's fingers crack, crackle, or snap? Probably the underlying idea of most of the translators is that Beowulf gripped so hard that his knuckles cracked, but to evolve this meaning from the

text requires an unjustifiably loose translation of both *fingras* and *burston*. I can find no other instance in Old English of *burston* for "cracked."

The passage should, I believe, be rendered literally, with the following signification, "[Grendel's] fingers burst [open and bled]." That the fingers referred to are Grendel's seems to be obvious from 764b-765:

*wiste his fingra geweald  
on grames grāpum.*

We must understand that Beowulf has seized Grendel by the hand, and is gripping and pulling it so hard that blood bursts from under the finger-nails. The sudden shift of subject from one person to another is, as I have shown above, everywhere to be expected in the poem.

Exact parallels are found in *Nibelungenlied* B. 675,

*Si druht im sīne hende daz ūz den nageln spranc  
daz pluot im von ir Krefte ;*

also in *Nib.* C. 657; and in *Salman und Morolt* 1609. The incident is common in modern novels; see e. g., *A Lear of the Steppes*, § 2, and *Micah Clarke*, chap. 21.

783.

*Norð-Denum siðð  
atelic egesa ānra gehwylcum,  
ðāra ðe of wealle wōp gehyrdon,  
gryrelðoð galan Godes ondsacan.*

Line 785 is usually rendered, "those who, from the wall, heard the howling," though Dr. C. Hall leaves the matter vague, and Professor Child ignores it altogether. Wyatt says in his glossary that *weal* means "burgh-wall," and some have felt that the appellation "North-Danes" also served to indicate that *wealle* here means "city-wall," as though we should translate, "the Danes who listen from the northern part of the city-wall." But "North-Danes" appears to be quite without significance here, for the same people have been variously called East-, West-, and South-Danes. Moreover, the translation "burgh-wall" is probably incorrect, since city-walls are nowhere referred to in the *Beowulf*, and are to be thought of, in general,

as belonging to a later period (cf. Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, pp. 90 ff.).

Dr. C. Hall in his preliminary note to this passage (p. 45), suggests, "Danes on the neighbouring castle-wall." But this seems unsatisfactory, Heorot being built of wood, and simple in its construction. No fortifications other than the walls of the building itself are mentioned; the outlying "bowers" (140) are probably adjoining huts, surely not a neighboring castle.

The wall of Heorot itself is the only one of importance enough to be mentioned, and we must, I think, render, "The North Danes who heard the howling from the wall[s] [of Heorot]," or more freely, "who heard the howling in the house."

815 ff. In the *Mabinogion* ("Pwyle, Prince of Dyved," near end), there is an incident of a giant claw that seizes new-born colts. The claw belongs to a monster of mysterious nature, who, like Grendel, is also a creature of the night. Like Grendel, again, he escapes leaving his arm behind him. Lady Guest's translation reads:

"And Teirnyon rose up, and looked at the size of the colt, and as he did so he heard a great tumult, and after the tumult, behold a claw came through the window into the house, and it seized the colt by the mane. Then Teirnyon drew his sword, and struck off the arm at the elbow, so that portion of the arm, together with the colt, was in the house with him. And then did he hear a tumult and a wailing both at once." (Cf. *Beo.* 786-87).

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## ITALIAN ACTORS IN SCOTLAND.

The following records of payments to Italian actors in Scotland are worthy of notice as showing early continental influence on the British drama. The record of 1517 shows that four Italian actors,—probably four of the